

Our parents heard the pessimists again in the 1950s when the Soviet Union launched the first satellite. Some of us remember hearing the pessimists in the 1970s and 1980s when we were told that America was tired and could no longer compete with Japan. At that moment, Ronald Reagan's tax cuts were just beginning to kick in, and that set off one of the largest economic expansions in our history. One newspaper editorialized about "the stench of failure" during that period of time.

You know, the great thing about our history when you look at it is, the American people have always proved the pessimists wrong. At the start of a hopeful new century, the American worker is the most productive worker that human history has ever known. At the start of this new century, we have proven that progrowth economic policies out of Washington, DC, do work and can overcome some mighty obstacles. At the start of the century, we recommit ourselves to the notion that the more free people are, the better off your economy will be.

This great country of ours is a place where people can start out with nothing and be able to raise a family and own a home or start a business. Through all my travels around the world, I'm always struck by how bright the future of America is. Our job in Washington is to keep that future bright and hopeful by making choices that reward hard work and enterprise. This economy is strong, and the best days are yet to come for the American economy.

I'm honored you let me come by. I'm always glad to come back to North Carolina. And I'm particularly pleased to be with the good, fine folks right here at the Deere-Hitachi plant. May God bless you and your families, and may God continue to bless our country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:08 p.m. at the John Deere-Hitachi Construction Machinery Corp. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Curtis L. Swisher of Kernersville, NC; and James R. Jenkins, senior vice president and general counsel, Deere & Co.

## Remarks Following a Meeting With Director-General Lee Jong-wook of the World Health Organization and an Exchange With Reporters

December 6, 2005

**President Bush.** It's been my honor to welcome the Director of the World Health Organization, Dr. Lee, to the Oval Office, where we have just had an extensive conversation with high-ranking officials in my administration about the international strategy to deal with a possible pandemic of avian flu.

And I want to thank you, Dr. Lee, for staying on top of this issue, for raising the consciousness of the world, for helping to develop an international response, and for working so closely with Mike Leavitt and Julie Gerberding and Bob Zoellick of the State Department. This is a remarkable collaborative effort to do our duty to help people.

The other thing that's really interesting, I found out, is Dr. Lee told me we're very close to eradicating polio. And I want to congratulate you—from the world, by the way—and I want to congratulate you for your good work on that issue.

**Director-General Lee.** Thank you.

**President Bush.** You're a good public servant. I'm just proud to welcome you here to the Oval Office.

**Director-General Lee.** Well, thank you very much. Clearly, we've been working on avian flu and pandemic flu for many years. But it really didn't take off until the President launched this initiative in September in New York. And then after that, he mentioned—he raised this issue with many heads of state. That really made a difference. I'm very honored to be here.

And about polio eradication, it was a teamwork. I appreciated the effort of the United States, especially the AID and CDC. And in the presence of the Secretary and also the Director, Julie Gerberding, that it is wonderful to be able to say that we are about to eradicate polio.

**President Bush.** Thank you, Dr. Lee.

Answer a couple of questions. Nedra [Nedra Pickler, Associated Press].

### **War on Terror in Iraq**

**Q.** Thank you, Mr. President. Insurgents in Iraq claim that they have taken a U.S. citizen hostage. We also have a U.S. peace activist who is being held. Is there anything you can do to get them back?

**President Bush.** We, of course, don't pay ransom for any hostages. What we will do, of course, is use our intelligence gathering to see if we can't help locate them. The best way to make sure that Iraq is a peaceful society is to continue to spread democracy. And clearly there are some there who want to stop the spread of democracy. There are terrorists there who will kill innocent people and behead people and kill children, terrorists who have got desires to hurt the American people.

And it should be—the more violent they get, the clearer the cause ought to be, that we're going to achieve victory in Iraq and that we'll bring these people to justice. We will hunt them down, along with our Iraqi friends, and at the same time, spread democracy.

Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters], yes.

### **Progress in Iraq**

**Q.** Howard Dean says the idea that the U.S. will win in Iraq is just plain wrong, and he's comparing the war to Vietnam. Is that a fair comparison, and what do you think about his comments?

**President Bush.** I know we're going to win, and our troops need to hear, not only are they supportive but that we have got a strategy that will win. Oh, there's pessimists, you know, and politicians who try to score points. But our strategy is one that is—will lead us to victory. The only thing that the enemy has got going for them is the capacity to take innocent life and to get on our TV screens with this devastation that they cause. These people cannot stand free societies. They have no regard for the human condition. They'll kill women and children at the drop of a hat, all aimed at frightening the American people and trying to get us to withdraw. And if we were to withdraw, the likes of Zarqawi, who is a sworn ally of bin Laden, would have a safe haven from which to plot and plan.

The lessons of September the 11th are lessons this country must never forget. We've

got to take each threat seriously. We've got to stay on the offense. In the long run, a democracy will help eradicate the conditions that allow these people to find any kind of support.

And so our strategy is twofold. On the one hand, we'll stay on the offense. We'll train Iraqi soldiers so they can take the fight to the enemy. And on the other hand, we'll continue to work with the Iraqi people to spread democracy.

And the American people must take notice of the fact that the people of Iraq are showing incredible courage in the face of this violence. After all, there was an election last January to put a Transitional National Government in place; then they voted on a Constitution. And in a short period of time, they're going to be voting for a new Government. They vote by the millions, which stands in stark contrast to the society in which they lived under the tyrant, Saddam Hussein, who, by the way, is now on trial, as he should be on trial.

I think his trial is indicative of the change that has taken place in the Iraqi society. In the old days, if Saddam and his cronies didn't like you, you didn't get a trial. You were just put to death or tortured. Today, there is a system, a judicial system in place that will give Saddam Hussein a chance to make his case in court, as well as giving those who have been tortured by Saddam Hussein a chance to step forth and provide witness to the brutality of this man.

I—our troops need to know that the American people stand with them, and we have a strategy for victory. And of course, there will be debate and, of course, there will be some pessimists and some people playing politics with the issue. But by far, the vast majority of people in this country stand squarely with the men and women who wear the Nation's uniform.

Carl [Carl Cameron, FOX News].

### **Detention Facilities Abroad**

**Q.** Thank you, Mr. President. Does your administration have any plans to change the policy of renditioning and/or the detention centers alleged to be taking place in Europe?

**President Bush.** Carl, first of all, I don't talk about secret programs, covert programs,

covert activities. Part of a successful war on terror is for the United States of America to be able to conduct operations, all aimed to protect the American people, covertly.

However, I can tell you two things: One, that we abide by the law of the United States; we do not torture. And two, we will try to do everything we can to protect us within the law. We're facing an enemy that would like to hit America again, and the American people expect us to, within our laws, do everything we can to protect them. And that's exactly what the United States is doing. We do not render to countries that torture. That has been our policy, and that policy will remain the same.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:11 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Ronald Schultz and Tom Fox, American citizens taken hostage in Iraq; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; and Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization. A reporter referred to Howard Dean, chairman, Democratic National Committee. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

## Remarks on Lighting the Hanukkah Menorah

*December 6, 2005*

Welcome to the White House. Laura and I are glad you're here, and we're glad to be here to celebrate the festival of Hanukkah. Hanukkah begins later this month. It's a time to remember the story of a miracle once witnessed in the Holy Temple in Jerusalem.

More than 2,000 years ago, the ancient land of Israel was conquered, and Jewish people were forbidden to pray, observe their religious customs, or study the Torah. In response, a patriot named Judah Maccabee led a revolt against the enemy army. Their numbers were small, yet their courage in defense of their faith was powerful, and they were triumphant.

When the Maccabees returned to reclaim their Holy Temple, the oil that should have lasted only 1 day, instead burned for 8 days. During Hanukkah, Jews across the world signify this miracle by lighting the menorah.

This act commemorates the victory of freedom over oppression and of hope shining through darkness. Today, that light still burns in Jewish homes and synagogues everywhere. And today, that light will burn here in the White House.

Laura and I are honored to have a beautiful menorah here from Park Synagogue in Cleveland, Ohio. Rabbi Skoff, thank you very much for sharing it with us. I also want to thank Rabbi Barry Gelman for his prayer and thank him for his deep compassion. As he mentioned, he is the rabbi from the United Orthodox Synagogues in Houston, whose members did so much to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

I want to thank the West Point Jewish Cadet Choir for being here with us this evening. Our Nation is grateful to the American troops of all faiths who are serving our country around the world and who are away from their families this holiday.

The word "Hanukkah" and the Hebrew word for education both come from the same root word that means "to dedicate." And earlier today, I met with some of the leaders from our Nation's Jewish day schools. As educators who dedicate themselves to teaching the faith and to teaching, they are fulfilling the true lesson of Hanukkah every day of the year. Just as the Maccabees reclaimed their Holy Temple, these teachers help ensure that Jewish traditions are passed from generation to generation.

Tonight as we prepare to light the candles, we are grateful for our freedoms as Americans, especially the freedom to worship. We are grateful that freedom is spreading to still new regions of the world, and we pray that those who still live in the darkness of tyranny will some day see the light of freedom.

And now, I invite Rabbi Skoff and his daughter and family to join me for the symbolic lighting of the White House menorah. The honor is yours.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:37 p.m. in the Bookseller's Area in the East Wing at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Rabbi Joshua Skoff, Park Synagogue, Cleveland Heights, Ohio, and his daughter, Eden.